

This is an official

CDC Health Advisory

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Confirmation of Human Rabies Infection in Mississippi

Background Information

On October 5, 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), working together with the Mississippi Department of Health, confirmed a diagnosis of rabies as the cause of death in a Mississippi child. This advisory provides information about this case, an update for states that may receive inquiries due to public concerns about rabies, and criteria for conducting risk assessments as part of these investigations to determine the need for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

The patient had been hospitalized with encephalitis of undetermined origin in September 2005. No history of foreign travel or definitive animal exposure was identified. A greater than fourfold rise in rabies virus antibodies was demonstrated in both paired serum and cerebrospinal fluid samples. No other clinical specimens were available to allow viral characterization and identification of a likely animal source of infection.

Bats are the only known reservoirs of rabies in Mississippi, and the state has reported no human cases since 1956. Although the child stayed at a popular summer camp in Alabama and participated in an overnight caving event in Tennessee during the summer, there were no known exposure incidents at either venue. On additional investigation, it was reported that the child removed a live bat from his bedroom in the spring of this year. The Mississippi Department of Health, in conjunction with local medical staff and CDC, conducted an investigation to identify contacts of the patient among family, the local community, and health-care workers. CDC will continue to work with other state health departments and health-care providers as additional information becomes available.

Human rabies is recommended only in situations in which potentially infectious material (e.g., saliva) from a rabid animal or human is introduced via a bite, or comes into direct contact with broken skin or mucous membranes. In addition, when a bat is physically present and rabies infection cannot be ruled out by testing the bat, human rabies PEP might be appropriate if there is a reasonable probability that an exposure might have occurred, such as when a bite cannot be excluded.

This is the first report of a human rabies case in the United States in 2005, and the 48th human case reported since 1990. Although human rabies is extremely rare in the United States, people are advised to exercise caution in settings where they might have contact with wildlife, especially bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes.

Camping and other outdoor activities do not present an elevated risk for rabies exposure. Regardless of activity, people should avoid contact with wildlife and stray animals.

Additional Information

Additional information about rabies and its prevention is available from the Mississippi Department of Health, telephone 601-576-7725 and at CDC, telephone 404-639-1050 or at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies>. This website is updated as new information becomes available.

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Contact your Regional Public Health Offices or the Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology for questions regarding criteria for conducting risk assessments as part of these investigations to determine the need for post exposure prophylaxis. Reporting of cases or suspect cases fitting the case definition is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <http://www.scdhec.net/hs/diseasecont/disease.htm>.

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

(Anderson, Oconee)

220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 231-1966
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

(Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda)

1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

(Greenville, Pickens)

PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 460-5355 or 1-800-993-1186

(Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union)

PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227 ext. 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

Region 3

(Chester, Lancaster, York)

PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29721
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886 or 1-888-739-0748

(Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland)

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: (803) 304-4252

Region 4

(Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter)

PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 773-6366
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

(Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion)

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

(Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg)

PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 536-9118
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

(Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell)

1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or 1-800-614-1519

Region 6

(Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg)

2830 Oak Street
Conway, SC 29526-4560
Phone: (843) 365-3126
Fax: (843) 365-3153
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

(Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)

4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 746-3806
Fax: (843) 746-3851
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

(Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)

219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 525-7603
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

Bureau of Disease Control

Acute Disease Epidemiology Division

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.